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MEGILLAT TAANIT AS A SOURCE FOR
JEWISH CHRONOLOGY AND HISTORY IN
THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

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CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE MEGILLAT TAANIT.

THE booklet, known as 'Megillat Taanit', gives a list of those days whereon, by reason of certain events therewith associated, Jews are not to fast. In most cases, brief reference is made to the events that severally mark them, while in a few instances nothing is said save that 'it is a Yom Tob whereon we are not to fast'. These days were semi-holidays, and their events were recorded in special scrolls to remind the people of these semi-festivals, which, on the other hand, were not to be put on a plane with the holidays ordained in the Pentateuch. To these semi-festivals the book of Judith refers when it says, 'Judith fasted all these days of her widowhood except the eves of Sabbaths, the Sabbaths, the days before new moons, the new moons, the holidays and days of rejoicing for the house of Israel', *καὶ χαρμοσυνῶν οἴκου Ἰσραήλ* (8. 6). It may be assumed that the present Megillat Taanit is one of a series of scrolls which circulated among the Jews in ancient times, commemorating important events in Jewish history. Megillat Taanit may properly be called the Jewish *monumentum aere perennius*.

It has no parallel in Hebrew historical literature. It is not written in the narrative vein of the Books of the Maccabees, but consists of a series of unconnected calendrical events, which are arranged according to the Hebrew dates and divided according to the Jewish calendar into twelve chapters corresponding to the twelve Hebrew months from Nisan to Adar.

The Megillah is written in Aramaic. In age, Megillat Taanit ranks next to the Scriptures, and is accorded great authority by the Tannaim, similar to that of the old Baraitot.¹ It is cited in the Mishnah, with the expression **כחוב**.² Of all the feast-days recorded in the Scroll, few are still observed. The other festivals have sunk into oblivion. This was quite natural. Their origin, as we

¹ Mishnah Taanit II (15 b).

² It was considered of great authority by the sages of the Mishnah, so that the Tannaim of the first half of the second century were divided in their interpretation of it (Taanit, *ibid.* in the Mishnah). The Talmud Babli quotes the Megillah with the expression **כחוב**. In the Palestinian Talmud we find citations from the Megillah introduced by the expression **תנן**. Incidentally it may be pointed out that the expression **תנן** is not necessarily an allusion to Oral Law, but also to a written Law. The opinion that the Mishnah was not written down until the time of Rabbi Ashi, which is based on the use of **תנן** and **תנו** in connexion with Mishnah and Baraita, thus loses much of its strength. **תנן** was used in the Talmud in the same manner as **ימד** and **תנו** in the Middle Ages. That the Mishnah was written down can be seen from the expression which the Amoraim employed when emending a passage in the Mishnah, viz. **חסורי מיחסרה** **והבי קתני**, thus implying a defective text, whereas the earlier Tannaim, like Rabbi Tarphon, used the expression **שמע השמע וטעה**. In the last mentioned case the word **שמע** implies oral tradition.

I wish to call attention here to a highly interesting variant which I found in a manuscript copy of the Tractate Abodah zarah (Spain, 1291) in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. For **לנרסינהו** in the printed edition, the manuscript reads **(לנרסינהו) דהא מכתבא כתבי נ** (Ab. zarah 8 b). That the Mishnah was written down even before the time of Rabbi, I shall fully demonstrate in a work on the History of the Oral Law.

shall see, was connected with the victories of the Jews over the Syrians in the Hasmonean period and over the Roman armies in the beginning of the 'War of Vespasian'. When, therefore, the Sanctuary was destroyed and Jewish independence lost, their *raison d'être* was gone. Thus in the days of Rabbi Joshua, not long after the destruction of the Temple, we find that the people paid no attention to these holidays. They even decreed a fast on Hanukkah (Rosh ha-Shanah 18 b). And this is in agreement with the statement of Rabbi Jose: 'Since the Temple is laid waste it is permissible to fast on the festive days which are enumerated in this Scroll' *אין בית המקדש קיים מותרין מפני שאבל* *זהו להם*. However, these semi-holidays were not formally abrogated by the rabbis. They gradually disappeared from the practices of the people, and this led to the discussion between Rab and Hanina, and their colleagues R. Johanan and R. Joshua ben Levi, as to whether the Yamim Tobim in the 'Megillah' are abrogated.³

In the course of this work it will be shown that the last event chronicled in our Megillah is that which took place on the 17th of Adar, 66 C. E. After this, Vespasian overcame all resistance in Galilee, and with the conclusion of the war the Jewish people lost its autonomy. This accords well with the date and circumstances of its composition which are preserved in a talmudic tradition. 'It was written', says the Talmud,⁴ 'by the colleagues of [R. Eleazar ben] Hanina ben Hezekiah ben Garon', i.e. a few years before the destruction of the Second Temple. Eleazar was the leader of the Rebellion, whom Josephus charges with having incited the people against the Romans.

³ Rosh ha-Shanah 18 b.

⁴ Shabbat 13 b. See the next note.

His object in circulating this Scroll was to show to the people that if they were fully resolved to throw off the yoke of the Romans they had as great prospect of success as the Hasmoneans and their followers had of throwing off the yoke of the Syrians.

This is corroborated by what the Talmud⁵ says of its being compiled by חנניה וסיעתו [אלעזר בן], i.e. by Eleazar and his associates who were leaders of the party in favour of the war against the Romans.

The name by which we are accustomed to designate this book—‘Megillat Taanit’—is indeed a misnomer, since it does not discuss Fasts; on the contrary, it points out certain days commemorative of joyful events and, declaring them ‘Yom Tob’, prohibits fasting thereon. It seems to me that the name ‘Megillat Taanit’ is of a later date, belonging either to the talmudic or post-talmudic period. Originally this book appears to have been called simply ‘Megillah’ (scroll or roll), and in this wise is referred to in the Mishnah. Thus in the Palestinian version of the Mishnah (Taanit 2) and in the Mishnah of Jerusalem (ed. W. H. Lowe, 1883) we meet with the expression ⁶כָּל הַכָּתוּב בְּמִגְילָה.

This theory as to the original name of Megillat Taanit is corroborated through a scribal error which is revealed

⁶ Shabbat 13 b. According to the Scholiast, it was ר' סיעתו של אלעזר בן חנניה. In Halakot Gedolot, p. 615 (ed. Hildesheimer) it is stated that this Megillah was written by the elders of Bet Shamai and Bet Hillel חנניה בן חזקיה בן גרון בשלועל לבקרו. See Derenbourg, *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine*, Paris, 1812, note 1, and Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, III⁵, part 2, p. 810.

⁶ See *Dikduke Soferim*, Taanit, II, 1, and *ibid.*, 17 a where the manuscript reading of the Talmud Babli too is given as **כָּל הַכָּתוּב בְּמִגְילָה**; the same is the reading of the Bodleian MS. Cf. also Tosefta (ed. Zuckerman) **לִימִים טוֹבִים הַכְּתוּבִים בְּמִגְילָה**: Taanit 2, 4.

in the Munich MS. For Talmud Babli (Megillah 5b) which reads **הכתיב במנילת תענית את יום ארבעה עשר ואת יום חמישה עשר יומי פוריין איננו** במנילת אחר reads, the Munich MS. **את יום ארבעה עשר ואת יום חמישה עשר יומי פוריין**. This is a palpable error, since the passage, 'The fourteenth and fifteenth are', is not quoted from the biblical scroll of Esther, but from the so-called 'Megillat Taanit'. This error is best explained by the assumption that the original text of the copyist read **במנילה**, which, owing to the context, he assumed, referred to the well-known biblical Scroll of Esther.

Besides the Aramaic text of the Megillah, there exists also a running commentary, or scholia, in Mishnic Hebrew, explaining the events which are mentioned in the Megillah. These scholia, all commentators are agreed, are the product of the Talmudic period.⁷ That we cannot rely on the scholiast where he gives us what purports to be the historical cause⁸ will be fully demonstrated in the course of this study.

⁷ Weiss, *Dor Dor we Dorshaw*, II, p. xxv.

⁸ Wellhausen, *Pharisäer und Sadducäer*, pp. 56-63.

CHAPTER II

CHRONOLOGY IN MACCABEES I AND II.

A CURSORY examination of the Megillah reveals clearly that some of the events which are there referred to belong to the Maccabean period, and some are connected with the Great Revolt. The Books of the Maccabees and the works of Josephus are therefore the primary sources upon which the student must rely in order to determine the true character of the dates and events which are mentioned in the Megillah. Unfortunately, however, the dates mentioned in these books are based on different systems of chronology and cannot be readily identified. Before we can solve the many perplexing identifications of the dates of the Megillah, we shall therefore have to examine critically the respective chronological systems of the first and second Books of the Maccabees and of the *Bellum Iudaicum*.

It is well known that there exists a discrepancy of one year between the First and Second Book of Maccabees.⁹ In both books of Maccabees the chronology is apparently based on the Seleucid era. In 1 Macc. (1. 10) this is

⁹ According to 1 Macc., Antiochus Eupator laid siege to Jerusalem in the year 150 (6. 20-61; cp. 7. 1), while according to 2 Macc. (13. 1), this siege and the peace were in the year 149. Similarly, according to 1 Macc. (6. 16) Antiochus IV died in 149, while according to 2 Macc. (9. 28) he died in 148. (Compare 2 Macc. 11 which contains the letters of Antiochus Eupator to the Jews, and while the letter in which reference is made to the recent death of his father (Antiochus IV) contains no date, still the presumption is that like the others, which are dated, it was written in 148.)

clearly: Ἀντίοχος Ἐπιφανῆς, νιὸς Ἀντίοχου βασιλέως, ὃς ἦν ὅμηρα ἐν τῇ Ρώμῃ, καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν ἐν ἔτει ἑκατοστῷ καὶ τριακοστῷ καὶ ἐβδόμῳ βασιλείας Ἐλλήνων. The current opinion is that the chronology of 1 Maccabees takes as its starting-point Nisan 312 B.C.E., while that of 2 Maccabees starts from Tishri 311 B.C.E.¹⁰ The view that 1 Maccabees reckons the beginning of the Seleucid era from the spring of 312 is of course at variance with the established fact that the Seleucid era dates from the fall of 312 B.C.E.¹¹ Nevertheless, this theory was forced upon scholars by the following circumstantial evidence. According to 1 Macc. (6. 20, cp. 7. 1) Antiochus V and Lysias with their army besieged the Temple mount in 150 A.S., and it is further explained that the Jews were at great disadvantage in the siege, having naught to eat by reason of that being the sabbatical year (*ὅτι σάββατον ἦν τῇ γῇ...* διὰ τὸ ἐβδομον ἔτος εἶναι, 6. 49-53). Now, the sabbatical

¹⁰ See Joseph Scaliger, *Opus de Emendatione Temporum*, lib. V; Dionysius Petavius, *De Doctrina Temp.*, lib. II; Usher, *Annal. Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, II, London, 1654; Noris, *Epoch Syromac.*, p. 75, 1696; Erasmo Froelich, *Annales Compendiarii Regum et rerum Syriae*, Prolegomena, Viennae, 1754; Ideler, *Handbuch der Chronologie*, I, pp. 531-4, Berlin, 1825; Schürer, *Geschichte*, 32-40. Unger, 'Die Seleukidenära der Makkabäerbücher' (*Sitzungsberichte der Philos.-Philol.-Hist. Cl. der k. b. Akademie der Wiss. zu München*, 1895) thinks that the chronology of 1 and 2 Maccabees takes as its *terminus a quo* the spring of 311 B.C. See also Gilbert, 'Mémoire sur la chronologie de l'histoire des Machabées' (*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, XXVI, 1759); Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, III, pp. 370-7. According to him the era in both books starts from the autumn of 312 B.C.

¹¹ This is also the opinion expressed by Prideaux, *Connexion*, I, p. 514-15, 'The first book begins the years of this era from the spring, but the second begins them from the autumn; and so did the Syrians, Arabs, and Jews, and all others that anciently did or now do use this era'. It is very strange that the author of the first book of Maccabees should have computed this era by a method different even from his own countrymen, the Jews.

year was from Tishri 1, 164 B. C. E. to Tishri 1, 163.¹² Hence if the chronology of 1 Maccabees took Tishri of 312 as its starting-point, then 150 A. S. corresponded with Tishri 163 to Tishri 162, and the year of the siege which was 150 A. S. could not have been a sabbatical year. If, on the other hand, it is assumed that the chronology of 1 Maccabees takes Nisan (312) as its starting-point, then 150 A. S. corresponds to the period from Nisan 163 B. C. E. until Nisan 162 B. C. E., and the summer of 163 B. C. E. actually falls in the sabbatical year. Thus the siege can be definitely placed in that summer.¹³

The chronology of 2 Maccabees is postponed one year beyond that of 1 Maccabees. If 1 Maccabees reckons its era from Nisan 312, then the chronology of 2 Maccabees must have begun from 311 B. C. E. This era, however, could not have started from the spring of 311, but from the autumn of 311, as is clearly proved from the letters of Antiochus V (2 Macc. 11. 17-33). One of these letters is dated in the month of Dioscurus of the year 148, while another of later date is marked Xanthicus of the year 148—which shows that the era of the chronology of 2 Maccabees did not begin from the spring, Xanthicus, but from the autumn—i. e. Tishri 311 B. C. E.¹⁴

This theory, however, is not acceptable. For among the Jews, the beginning of the civil year was always reckoned not from Nisan, but from Tishri. Thus the tradition was fixed 'באחד בחשורי ראש השנה לשנים' from the first day of Tishri, the beginning of the year is reckoned.'¹⁵

¹² Schürer, *I. c.*, p. 35; see also below, chap. III.

¹³ Schürer, *I. c.*, p. 214. About the other difficulties see below, note 27.

¹⁴ See further Ideler, *Handbuch*, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Rosh ha-Shanah, p. 2. Josephus (I have employed Niese's edition throughout) likewise tells us that with respect to months, holidays, and

The former theory could only with difficulty be reconciled with the chronography of 1 Maccabees. For according to 1 Macc. 16. 14, Simon the Hasmonean was killed in the year 177 A.S. in the month of Shebat. Now if the Seleucid era in 1 Maccabees began from Nisan 312 B.C., then the month in which Simon was killed would fall in the year 135 B.C.E.; the year 177 extending from Nisan 136 to Nisan 135. But according to the account of Josephus (*Ant. XIII*, 8. 1-2, cp. *XIII*, 7. 4) the year after Simon's death was a sabbatical year, and that sabbatical year was Tishri 136 to Tishri 135.¹⁶ Again, according to this theory, the siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus V, which, according to 1 Maccabees, occurred in 150 A.S. and which is described as a sabbatical year, must be dated in the summer of 163 B.C.E. (cp. above, p. 78), and this is opposed by the Megillah which, if our interpretation is correct, dates the raising of this siege specifically on the 28th of Shebat (see below, chap. IX, No. VIII, p. 70).

I venture to suggest a new solution to the chronological difficulties of 1 Maccabees. The reckoning of the Seleucid era has its origin, as is well known, in the victory gained by Demetrius over Ptolemy near Gaza, at which time the Seleucid dynasty was founded. That battle was fought in the summer of 312 B.C.E., for in the words of Josephus

festivals, Moses commanded that the year should be counted from Nisan (spring), but in connexion with matters of business and general affairs, the year should be counted from Tishri. *Antt.* I, 3. 3 Συνέβη δὲ τοῦτο τὸ πάθος κατὰ τὸ ἔξακοσιοστὸν ἔτος ἡδη Ναέου τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἐν μηνὶ δευτέρῳ, Δίψι μὲν ὑπὸ Μακεδόνων λεγομένῳ, Μαρσονάνῃ δ' ὑπὸ Ἐβραίων· οὕτω γάρ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἦσαν διατεταχότες. Μωυσῆς δὲ τὸν Νισάνην, ὃς ἐστι Εαυθικός, μῆνα πρῶτον ἐπὶ ταῖς ἑορταῖς ὥρισε κατὰ τοῦτον ἐξ Αἰγύπτου τὸν Ἐβραίον προαγαγάνων. οὗτος δ' αὐτῷ καὶ πρὸς ἀπάσας τὰς εἰς τὸ θεῖον τιμὰς ἥρχεν. ἐπὶ μέντοι γε πράσεις καὶ ὄντες καὶ τὴν ἀλλην διοικησιν τὸν πρῶτον κόσμον διεφύλαξε.

¹⁶ Schürer, I, p. 35; see also below, chap. III.

(*Contra Apionem*, I, 22, 184), following Castor, this battle took place in the eleventh year after Alexander died—
ένδεκάτῳ μὲν ἔτει τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τελευτῆς, . . . ὡς ιστορεῖ
Κάστωρ. Alexander the Great died in May or June 323 B. C. E.,¹⁷ and the eleventh year closed, then, in the latter part of May or June 312 B. C. E.¹⁸ All the cities in the countries around the Holy Land adopted the year of the battle, which established the rule of the Seleucids as a new era, but fixed the beginning of the year according to the traditional New Year season which had prevailed in the respective countries. For instance, in Damascus they counted the years of the Seleucid era from the spring of 312 B. C. E., as can be seen on their coins,¹⁹ while other cities counted their era from Hyperberetaeus or from Dius.²⁰ It was quite natural, therefore, for the Jews, too, when they adopted this era to arrange it in accordance with their traditional New Year and their methods of calendrical calculations. The interval from the coronation of the king until Nisan was counted as year one of his reign; and from that Nisan to the next Nisan as year

¹⁷ Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, II, p. 176.

¹⁸ Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, II, p. 45.

¹⁹ Schürer, I, 37.

²⁰ Ideler, *l. c.*, I, 413-37. Many cities under Roman influence began their years in the Seleucid era from the month of January. Wieseler, *Chronologische Synopse*, p. 452. According to Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, III, pp. 364, 91, Eusebius, while dating from the origin of the Seleucide dynasty, in effect puts it January 312 B. C. Unger, *Die Seleukidenära der Makkabäerbücher*, *l. c.*, pp. 300-316, thinks that many cities counted their years from October 313, and so likewise Porphyry reckoned the years of Olympiads—not from the month of July 776 B. C., which was the first Olympiad, but from Dius 777 B. C. (Unger, *l. c.*, p. 300); and so does Josephus reckon the years in connexion with Olympiads in his *Antiquities*. See more about this below, chap. IV.

two.²¹ Anniversaries and births which were dated not from Nisan but from Tishri²² illustrate the same principle. If, for example, a person was born in the course of the year, the rest of that year up to Tishri was considered the first year of his life; from that Tishri to the next Tishri his second year.²³

When, therefore, the Jews adopted the calendar of the Seleucidan era, they moulded it to their view-point; that is to say, the New Year date was retained as the first of Tishri, but Tishri 312 B.C.E. marked the beginning of the second year of the newly-established era, the interval from the summer when the battle of Gaza was fought until Tishri 312 B.C.E. being counted as year one of the era.

1 Maccabees, written for Jews, in Hebrew and²⁴ in Palestine, used the chronology of Judea. Thus we can now harmonize the date of Simon's death, given in 1 Maccabees, as 177 A.S., with the account of Josephus describing the year following Simon's death as a sabbatical year. For Shebat 177 A.S. corresponds to Shebat 136 B.C.E., while the sabbatical year began on the following New Year, Tishri 136 B.C.E.²⁵ Likewise, the date of the Megillah, which places the siege of Antiochus V in the winter months,²⁶ becomes tenable; for the year 150 A.S. corre-

²¹ *Rosh ha-Shanah* 10 b.

²² *Rosh ha-Shanah*, Mishnah, Jerushalmi, *ibid.* 56b. See also above, note 15. And this is what the Talmud says: *חכמי ישראל מונים ל'ב'ול כר"א אליעזר* מונים ל'ב'ול כר"א אליעזר, *ibid.*, 12a. 'They counted the years of the successive generations from the month of Tishri according to R. Eliezer, who said that the world was created in Tishri.' See Rapoport, '*Erek Millin*', p. 92.

²³ *Midrash rabba* Num. I.

²⁴ Hieronymi Opera . . . Praefatio in lib. Samuel, p. 459, Venetiis, 1770: 'Machabaeorum primum librum Hebraicum reperi, secundus Graecus est quod ex ipsa quoque φράσει probari potest'.

²⁵ See below, chap. III.

²⁶ See below, No. VIII.

sponds to 164-163 B.C.E., which was a full sabbatical year.²⁷

²⁷ See below, chap. III. The difficulties which caused scholars to deny that the chronology in *i Maccabees* is based on the year beginning in autumn, prove groundless on closer scrutiny. Let us examine them :

(1) According to *i Macc.* 7. 1 Demetrius became king in 151 A.S. From 7. 43 . . . we learn that Nicanor was killed on the 13th of Adar. The year of his death is not recorded specifically, but it was no doubt 151, as further on (9. 3) it says that when Demetrius heard that Nicanor was killed, he dispatched a great army against Judea in the first month, in the year 152 A.S. And so, according to their understanding of the matter, the chronology of *i Maccabees* does not reckon the year from the autumn ; for the interval between the death of Nicanor until the time that Demetrius heard the astounding news, would be very long, whereas other things point to its having been quite short. Consequently they adopt the view that this chronology deals with a year that began in the spring and that Nicanor was killed in Adar 151 A.S., and that in Nisan 'the first month of 152 A.S.', Demetrius received the news.

But, as I have said above, the chronology of *i Maccabees* is really based on the Judean chronology, i.e. that in which the year began in autumn (Tishri), though the months are numbered from Nisan. That the months were so counted is proved by *i Macc.* 16. 14, where it is stated that Simon was killed in the eleventh month, 'the same is the month Shebat'.

The month of Adar in which Nicanor was killed does not belong to the winter of 151 A.S., but to the winter of 152 A.S., and is in our notation Adar of 161 B.C.E. The month in which Demetrius heard the report was, indeed, Nisan (נִשָּׂן) in the year 152 A.S. This (corresponding to 161 B.C.E.) was a leap year, immediately succeeding the post-sabbatical year (150 A.S. was sabbatic), since neither in a sabbatic nor in a post-sabbatic year was intercalation of a month permitted (see below, p. 96 and note 62). The intercalation of Adar II quite well explains how so early as Nisan, Demetrius could receive complete official reports and absolute verification of what happened to Nicanor on the 13th of Adar ; eight weeks had elapsed (see Grimm, *Exegetisches Handbuch zu I. Macc.* p. 118).

(2) According to *i Macc.* 10. 1, Alexander Balas became king in 160 A.S., and after informing us that he (the king) sent friendly messages to Jonathan and appointed him High Priest, the writer goes on to say (10. 21) that Jonathan put on the priestly garments in the feast of Tabernacles in the year 160 A.S., from which they deduce : If in the chronology of *i Maccabees* years were reckoned from the autumn, how was it possible for Jonathan's

This theory is further corroborated in the account of Antiochus IV as it is given in *1 Maccabees*, where he is said to have become king in the year 137 A.S.²⁸ This, according to the general notion, was 176–175 B.C. He is said to have died in 149 A.S.,²⁹ i.e. 164–163 B.C. But as Niese³⁰ has well shown, this Antiochus, according to Eusebius, became king in Olymp. 151, 2, i.e. 175–174, and died in Olymp. 153, 4, i.e. 165–164. This, also according to Jerome, is the chronology of Eusebius.³¹ Niese furthermore has clearly shown that the death of Antiochus IV must have been 165 B.C.E.,³² for Polybius³³ says (Book XXXI, chap. 12) that when upon the receipt at Rome of the intelligence of Antiochus IV's death, and of his son's ascending the throne, senators were sent as delegates to Antioch, Cn. Octavius (consul in 165 B.C.) was at their

action on the feast of Tabernacles to occur in the same year as the action of Alexander Balas, which preceded it by less than a month?

This second objection loses its weight, as we have good reason to doubt whether 160 belongs to that part of the narrative where the feast of Tabernacles is brought in, and good reason to believe that it crept in through misunderstanding of a scribe. For in the Lucianic recension we find in 10. 21 no mention of 160 A.S. or any other year (see ed. Charles); Josephus, likewise, makes no mention of the year 160 A.S. in his narrative of the investiture of Jonathan on the Feast of Tabernacles. (*Antiq.* XIII 2. 1 and 3.)

²⁸ *I. M.* 1, 10.

²⁹ *I. M.* 6. 16.

³⁰ Niese, 'Kritik der beiden Makkabäerbücher', *Hermes*, XXXV, 1900, p. 494, and id., *Geschichte der griechischen und macedonischen Staaten*, III, p. 208. See also Abrahams, 'Niese on the books of the Maccabees', *JQR.*, XIII, pp. 508–19.

³¹ Hieronymus, VIII, pp. 567–71; Eusebius, *Chron.*, ed. Schoene.

³² Niese placed the death of Antiochus IV in the winter of 165 B.C.E. See *Geschichte*, III, p. 218, note 7 and his *Kritik der Makkabäerbücher*, p. 495–6.

³³ Polyb. *Histor.* XXXI (frag. 12) εὐθέως γὰρ καταστήσαντες πρεσβευτὰς τοὺς περὶ Γνάιον Ὁκταονίον καὶ Σπόριον Λοκρήτιον καὶ Λεύκιον (1075).

head.³⁴ Neither the theory that 1 Maccabees dates the beginning of the Seleucidan era from Tishri 312 or from Nisan 312 (according to the generally accepted view), would square with the date of Antiochus's death in 165-164 B.C.E. On the other hand, according to the theory which I have proposed, counting Tishri 1, 312 B.C.E. as the beginning of the second year, the year 149 assigned as the date of Antiochus's death, corresponds to 165-164 B.C.E. as given in Eusebius and corroborated by Polybius.³⁵

³⁴ Niese, *l. c.*; Zumpt, *Annales*, p. 94; Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, III, p. 84.

³⁵ At first glance Eusebius's statement that Antiochus IV reigned eleven years, does not seem to square with 1 Maccabees, where he is said to have reigned from 137 to 149. This is easily explained, however, by Eusebius's method of counting only complete years, while 1 Maccabees counted from his ascending the throne until he died. As Appian says (*Syriaka* 66): Σελεύκου μὲν ἔτει δώδεκα, ἀπράκτως ἀμά καὶ ἀσθενῶς διὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς συμφοράν, 'Αντιόχου δὲ δώδεκα οὐ πλήρεσιν . . . and upon Appian's words we can place more reliance, since he preceded Eusebius a considerable time, and undoubtedly had authorities for what he said. That Eusebius counted only the whole years of kings' reigns we can see also from the case of Alexander. According to his chronicles Alexander the Great ruled only twelve years, whereas in fact he ruled more than that—his reign lasted twelve years and eight months. Says Arrian (VII, 28): ἐβασίλευσε δὲ δώδεκα ἔτη καὶ τοὺς ὀκτὼ μῆνας τούτοις. See Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, II, p. 176, Oxford, 1841.

Unger, as we have already remarked in note 10, thinks that the chronology of 1 Maccabees began with the spring of 311 B.C.E. because, according to 1 Macc. (1. 20), Antiochus returned from Egypt in the year 143 A.S., and this according to the general impression corresponded to 170-69 B.C.E. Indeed, Antiochus IV was in Palestine in the summer of 169 B.C.E. Therefore, according to Unger's view, if we say that the chronology of 1 Maccabees starts from the spring of 311 B.C., the 143rd year must be from the spring of 169 to the spring of 168 B.C. But Schürer (*Geschichte*, p. 38, note 7) truly points out that Antiochus IV was not only once but several times in Egypt (see also Wilcken in Pauly-Wissowa's *Real-Enc.*, II, 2470-6, and Clinton, *Fasti Hel.* III, pp. 317-29). In my opinion, Unger is correct in thinking that Antiochus was in Egypt in the summer of

We are now in a position better to understand the chronology of Book II.³⁶ The difference between the respective chronologies of these two books arises out of the circumstances in which these two books were written. Whereas 1 Maccabees, as stated above, was written for Jews and in Hebrew, 2 Maccabees was plainly an apologetic work written for the Jews in Egypt, being merely an epitome of the larger Greek work of Jason. As the author stated himself: *τὰ ὑπὸ Ἰάσων τοῦ Κυρηναίου δεδηλωμένα διὰ πέντε βιβλίων, πειρασόμεθα δι' ἐνὸς συντάγματος ἐπιτεμεῖν* (2. 23).

It is but natural therefore that the chronology of 2 Maccabees is not that of the Jews (in Palestine) but the chronology which was current throughout Hellenistic Syria and Egypt, which dated the beginning of the Seleucid era from the autumn of 312 B.C.E. Consequently, the Seleucidan era of 2 Maccabees appears one full year less than that of 1 Maccabees, though they record the same event. The calendrical year among the Jews began in Tishri (cp. above, p. 78). It was but natural therefore to retain this New Year in the adopted Seleucidan era. According to another principle of calendrical calculation, which applied to the political as well as the civil calendar, a fractional year was considered a year. Thus the year 149, which according

169 B.C.E. This follows from Livy XLIV, chap. II, 5. But this was not, as Unger supposes, the first invasion of Egypt, but the second. Thus 2 Macc. (5. 1-21) alludes to it by saying that Antiochus IV captured Jerusalem the second time when he returned from Egypt, i.e. 169-8. Similarly 1 Macc. (1. 29-54) states that Antiochus IV captured Jerusalem for the second time two years after his first capture of the city on his return from Egypt in the 143rd year A.S. (171-70), i. e. in the year 145 A.S. (169-8). See further on this matter, below, the discussion of the chronology of the Books of the Maccabees.

³⁶ See above, note 9.

to 1 Maccabees was the year when Antiochus IV died, is the same as 148 of 2 Macc. 9 and 11.³⁷

³⁷ Vainly did Niese strive to show (*Kritik der beiden Makkabäerbücher*) that 2 Maccabees is more historical than 1 Maccabees, from the fact that 2 Maccabees places Antiochus's death in 148 A.S., which according to the commonly accepted view equals 165-4 B.C., whereas 1 Maccabees puts his death in 149 A.S., which by that view would equal 164-3, and this would be contrary to fact. As I have demonstrated, however, there is no historical difference between the two books in their dating of the death of the fourth Antiochus. See, also, the review by Israel Lévi in *RÉJ.*, 1901, pp. 222-30, and Wellhausen in *Nachrichten der Kgl. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen*, 1905, pp. 117-63.

CHAPTER III

THE ORDER OF THE SABBATICAL CYCLES.

THE theory which we have advanced above regarding the Seleucid era as it was known among the Palestinian Jews and as it was used in *1 Maccabees*, finds striking corroboration in the various references to the sabbatical cycles which are found in *1 Maccabees*, Josephus, and in the Talmud, and which have hitherto been considered contradictory and conflicting. Despite the diverse nature of these sources it will be found that the sabbatical years to which they allude, and which belong to wholly different periods, all harmonize with each other if we calculate the Seleucid era in *1 Maccabees* according to our theory.

Abundant references to the sabbatical institution as it existed in the Second Commonwealth occur in early Jewish literature. The year of Release naturally began in the Fall and not in the Spring, when the seed was already sown and the trees planted. The crucial problem is to determine in what years of a general era the sabbatical cycles began and ended. The following passages furnish the chief evidence by which the dating of the sabbatical cycle may be computed:

(1) In *1 Maccabees* we are told that the year 150 A.S. was a sabbatical year.³⁸

(2) From Josephus we learn that the year after the assassination of Simon the Hasmonean was a sabbatical year.³⁹ The assassination having taken place according

³⁸ *1 Macc.* 6. 20–54; *Ant.* XII, 9, 5.

³⁹ *Ant.* XIII, 8. 1.

to 1 Maccabees in Shebat 177 A.S.,⁴⁰ the following year was 178 A.S.

(3) Likewise we find in Josephus that the capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sosius was in a sabbatical year.⁴¹ This event is dated Olympiad 185 in the consulate of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus.

(4) Finally, according to tannaitic authority the destruction of the Second Temple was in a post-sabbatical year.⁴²

When subjected to a critical examination, however, the testimony of these sources does not seem to tally. It has already been pointed out above that according to the generally favoured theory the Seleucid era of 1 Maccabees is to be dated from Nisan 312 B.C.E. The statement (1) that the year 150 A.S. was a sabbatical year contradicts the statement (2) of Josephus that the year following the death of Simon was a sabbatical year (cp. above, p. 81). As to the capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sosius, the consulate of Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus establishes it as having fallen in 37 B.C.E., and we are further informed by Josephus that the sabbatical year overlapped the time of the siege and continued for a period following the fall of the city, which occurred on a fast day (*Ant.*, XIV, 16. 3; XV, 1. 2). The fast day to which Josephus alludes here is taken by some scholars to refer to the Day of Atonement, and consequently the capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sosius is definitely dated by these as Tishri 10, 37 B.C.E.⁴³ This date is impossible,

⁴⁰ 1 Macc. 16. 14.

⁴¹ *Ant.* XIV, 16. 2.

⁴² *Seder Olam Raba*, XXX; *Talmud Taanit* 29 a.

⁴³ Van der Chijs, *de Herode Magno*, pp. 35-41; Ewald, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, IV; Lewin, *Fasti Sacri*, p. 59; Gardthausen, *Augustus*

however, for one sabbatical year could not overlap the old and the new year, which terminate and begin respectively on the first day of Tishri. Besides, if the sabbatical year is assumed to have fallen in 164–163 B.C.E., then the year 38–37 was a sabbatical year, whereas, according to the above interpretation, it would be necessary to assume that it occurred in 37–36 B.C.E., if, as Josephus has it, the sabbatical year continued after the capture of Jerusalem.

Most of the later scholars, on the other hand, date this capture of Jerusalem in the middle of the summer, 37 B.C.E.⁴⁴ This accords well with the calculation that the sabbatical year was 38–37 B.C.E., and also with the statement that the sabbatical year overlapped the time of the siege and the period following the capture of the city. But this date of the capture of Jerusalem fixes the beginning of Herod's rule in the summer of 37 B.C.E., and in this connexion a later passage relating to Herod's reign obviously contradicts the calculation of the sabbatical cycle. Thus, Josephus states that in the thirteenth year of Herod's reign there was a famine in Palestine, and also the seed that they sowed that year yielded no fruit the second year.⁴⁵ Now the thirteenth year of Herod's reign, counting Nisan as the 'New Year for Kings', corresponds to Nisan 25–24 B.C.E. But according to the above calcu-

und seine Zeit, and 'Die Eroberung Jerusalems durch Herodes', *Rhein. Museum*, 1895, pp. 311–14; Unger, *l. c.*, pp. 273–77; Kellner, *Katholik*, II, 1887, pp. 118–21.

⁴⁴ Herzfeld, 'Wann war die Eroberung Jerusalems durch Pompejus, und wann die durch Herodes?' *Monatsschrift f. Gesch. u. Wissenschaft des Judenth.*, 1855, pp. 109–15; Kromayer, 'Die Eroberung Jerusalems durch Herodes', *Hermes*, XXIX (1894), pp. 563–71; Graetz, *Geschichte*, III, p. 196; Hitzig, *Geschichte*, II, 532.

⁴⁵ *Ant.* XV, 9, 1; comp. XV, 9, 2; Schürer, I, p. 367.

lation of the sabbatical cycles, the winter of 24 B.C.E. was a sabbatical year and cannot be reconciled with the statement that seed was sown that year.⁴⁶

As to the tannaitic reference to the sabbatical year preceding the destruction of the Temple, i.e. 68–69 C.E., this accords well with the previous calculation of the sabbatical cycles on the basis of *1 Maccabees*. But the reliability of this statement too was challenged by critics who oppose to it the statement of Josephus that Simon the Zealot, in the winter of 68–69 C.E. (cp. *Bell. Iud.* IV, 9. 7 and 12), fell upon Idumea with his army like a host of locusts, wasting the land and consuming all that grew in the country. Thus it appears that the Idumeans who observed the Jewish laws since the time of Hyrcanus I did not observe this year as a sabbatical year.⁴⁷

These seemingly insurmountable difficulties in the way of establishing the sabbatical cycle may be cleared by a careful investigation of each passage, provided that our theory of the Seleucid era in *1 Maccabees* is presupposed. Thus we have already shown that, according to our theory, the year following the death of Simon, which is dated Shebat 177 A.S. was 136–135 B.C.E., which harmonizes with the dating of 150 A.S., or 164–163 B.C.E. as the sabbatical year (see above, p. 8). As to the difficulties which are raised by the passage in Josephus relating to the capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sosius, it is crucial first to establish critically the month and the year in which this event took place. Neither the date of the summer of 37 B.C.E. nor of Tishri of that year is acceptable. The former implies that by the solemnity of the fast Josephus referred to the sabbath. This is conceivable as regards

⁴⁶ Unger, *l. c.*, pp. 278–80.

⁴⁷ See also Unger, *l. c.*, 280–1.

Dio, the pagan, but not Josephus the Jew.⁴⁸ The latter date is inherently contradictory, as has already been pointed out, for the sabbatical year could not extend both prior to and after Tishri. Another date must therefore be established in order to render this passage in Josephus in any way intelligible.

The statement of Josephus reads: 'The destruction befell the city of Jerusalem when Marcus Agrippa and Caninius Gallus were consuls at Rome, in the hundred and eighty-fifth Olympiad, on the third month, on the solemnity of the fast'. *Τοῦτο τὸ πάθος συνέβη τῇ Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν πόλει ὑπατεύοντος ἐν 'Ρώμῃ Μάρκου Ἀγρίππα καὶ Κανιδίου (Κανινίου) Γάλλου ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκαστοτῆς ὁγδοηκοστῆς καὶ πέμπτης ὀλυμπιάδος τῷ τρίτῳ μηνὶ τῇ ἑορτῇ τῆς νηστείας* (*Ant. XIV, 16. 4*). Now Dio Cassius, in describing the same event, refers it to the time of the Consuls Claudius and Norbanus.⁴⁹ Evidently there is a contradiction between

⁴⁸ See Herzfeld, *l. c.*, p. 112. Strabo (born 60–55 B.C.E.) tells us that Jerusalem was taken by Pompey on a fast day—*ἡ τῆς νηστείας ἡμέρα*.—Reinach, *Textes*, p. 103. Dio misunderstood and substituted sabbath day (*ἐν τῇ τοῦ Κρόνου ἡμέρᾳ*) (Dio, *XXXVII, 15, 16*). Some Roman historians were of the opinion that the sabbath was a fast day to the Jews, which we also find in a letter by Augustus. 'Ne Iudeus quidem, mi Tiberi, tam diligenter sabbatis ieunium servat quam ego hodie servavi' (Suetonius, *Augustus*, 76), and the same opinion is expressed by Pompeius Trogus, 'Septimum diem more gentis sabbata appellatum in omne aevum ieunio sacrant' (Reinach, *Textes*, p. 254), and also Petronius is under the same impression: 'et non ieunia sabbata lege premet' (Reinach, *Textes*, p. 266). On the other hand Josephus nowhere states that the sabbath was a fast day to the Jews. Also Tacitus is silent on this matter; 'septimo die otium placuisse ferunt, quia is finem laborum tulerit' (Reinach, *l. c.*, p. 305), apparently unaware of Sabbath being a fast day.

⁴⁹ Dio, *XLIX, 22–3* Γάιος δὲ δὴ Σόσσιος τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς τε Συρίας καὶ τῆς Κιλικίας παρ' αὐτοῦ [Antony] λαβὼν τοὺς τε Ἀραδίους πολιορκηθέντας τε μέχρι τότε καὶ λιμῷ καὶ νόσῳ ταλαιπωρηθέντας ἔχειρώσατο καὶ τὸν Ἀντίγονον τοὺς φρουροὺς τοὺς παρ' ἐαυτῷ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ὃντας ἀποκτείναντα μάχῃ τε ἐνίκησε, καὶ

the two historians. The consulate of Agrippa and Gallus was in 37 B. C. E., 717 A. U. C., while that of Claudius and Norbanus was in 38 B. C. E., 716 A. U. C. Choosing between these two sources, Clinton rejected the testimony of Josephus in favour of Dio, and consequently placed the capture of Jerusalem in December 38 B. C. E.⁵⁰ Thus the capture of Jerusalem falls properly in the sabbatical year 38-37 B. C. E., and the month is preceded as well as followed by the sabbatical season. But this theory entirely invalidates the testimony of Josephus, and what is more, it does not explain the allusion to the fast-day.

It is my opinion that the difference between the two accounts in Josephus and Dio respectively does not represent a contradiction in fact, but merely a difference in their respective methods of reckoning the consulate. Dio reckons the consulate from the date that the Consuls enter into office. According to Varo, the term of the Roman consuls at this time began in March.⁵¹ Josephus, on the other hand, employed the Macedonian calendar, in which calendar

καταφυγόντα ἐς τὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα πολιορκίᾳ κατεστρέφατο. πολλὰ μὲν δὴ καὶ δεινὰ καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ἔδρασαν (τὸ γάρ τοι γένος αὐτῶν θυμωθὲν πικρότατὸν ἔστι), πολλῷ δὲ δὴ πλεία αὐτοὶ ἔπαθον. ἔάλωσαν μὲν γὰρ πρότεροι μὲν οἱ ὑπὲρ τοῦ τεμένους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀμυνόμενοι, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἐν τῷ τοῦ Κρόνου καὶ τότε ἡμέρᾳ ἀνομασμένῃ, καὶ τοσοῦτόν γε τῆς θρησκείας αὐτοῖς περιήν ὥστε τοὺς προτέρους τοὺς μετὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ χειρωθέντας παραιτησθαί τε τὸν Σόσσιον, ἐπειδὴ ἡμέρα αὐθις ἡ τοῦ Κρόνου ἐνέστη, καὶ ἀνελθόντας ἐς αὐτὸν πάντα μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν τὰ νομιζόμενα ποιῆσαι. ἐκείνους μὲν οὖν Ἡράδη τινὶ ὁ Ἀντώνιος ἄρχειν ἐπέτρεψε, τὸν δὲ Ἀντίγονον ἐμαστίγωσε σταυρῷ προσδῆσας, δι μηδεὶς βασιλεὺς ἄλλος ὑπὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπεπόνθει, καὶ μετὰ τούτο καὶ ἀπέσφαξεν. ἐπὶ μὲν δὴ τοῦ τε Κλαυδίου τοῦ τε Ναρβανοῦ τούθ' οὔτως ἐγενέτο.

⁵⁰ Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, III, p. 220; Fischer, *Römische Zeittafeln*, Altona, 1846, p. 350.

⁵¹ Varro 6, 12 frag. and 33 'si a Martio ut antiqui constituerunt numeres'. See also Th. Mommsen, *Die römische Chronologie*, Berlin, 1859, pp. 98-9.

the Olympian year began in the fall, as we shall show presently.⁵² In the same manner, the consulate too was reckoned not from the day when the consuls entered into office, but from the beginning of the Olympian year which was in the autumn. Thus the consulates are fixed by Polybius.⁵³ Consequently the events which occurred between Dius—in the autumn months—and March would, according to this system, be reckoned in the succeeding consulate.

If to this explanation of Josephus's use of the Macedonian calendar we would add the statement of Josephus that 'the destruction befell the city of Jerusalem . . . in the third month', we are in a position definitely to ascertain the exact date on which the event occurred, and to identify the 'solemnity of the fast'. The third month cannot mean the third month of the siege, as Josephus states elsewhere that the city fell after a siege of five to six months.⁵⁴ It cannot refer to the third month of the Hebrew calendar, as it is placed together with the Olympian year. It can therefore only mean in the third month of the Olympian year of the 185th Olympiad, and it must furthermore be the Olympian year of the Macedonian calendar. For the third month in the Attic-Olympian calendar corresponds to the Hebrew Tishri, which makes it impossible to harmonize with the statement that the sabbatical season preceded and followed the capture of Jerusalem. The third month is thus the month of Audyneus,

⁵² See below, chap. IV.

⁵³ Comp. H. Nissen, 'Die Oekonomie der Geschichte des Polybios', *Rhein. Mus.* XXVI (1871), pp. 241-82.

⁵⁴ The siege lasted from five to six months. *Bell. Iud.* I, 18. 2; comp. V, 9. 4

which corresponds to December and January, i. e. the Hebrew month Tebet. It may therefore be assumed that the fast-day refers to the tenth of Tebet,⁵⁵ and consequently the capture of Jerusalem took place January 13-14, 37 B. C. E. = 717 A. U. C.

This date would be placed in the consulate of Claudius and Norbanus by Dio, while Josephus would advance it into the consulate of Agrippa and Gallus. This date fulfils also the other conditions, namely, that it falls in a sabbatical year, and was preceded as well as followed by the sabbatical season.

The date of the capture of Jerusalem marks the beginning of Herod's reign. According to the Jewish calculation of the royal era from Nisan, the month of Nisan in 37 B. C. E. was the beginning of the second year of his reign. Consequently, the thirteenth and fourteenth years were not 25-24 and 24-23 B. C. E., but 26-25 and 25-24 B. C. E., while the sabbatical year was indeed 24-23 B. C. E.

The theory which is equally prevalent that the first year of Herod must be reckoned either from Nisan of 37 B. C. E. or from 10 Tishri of 37 B. C. E. is based on Josephus's synchronizing the seventh year of Herod with that of the battle of Actium, which was fought on September 2, 31 B. C. E. From this it is assumed that we must consider his first year to have begun in the year 37 B. C. E.⁵⁶ 'Ἐν τούτῳ καὶ τῆς ἐπ' Ἀκτίῳ μάχης συνεσταμένης Καίσαρι πρὸς Ἀντώνιον ἐβδόμου [δ'] ὄντος Ἡρώδῃ τῆς βασιλείας ἔτους, σεισθεῖσα ἡ γῆ τῶν Ἰουδαίων (*Ant.* XV, 5. 2).

This assumption appears groundless when we subject

⁵⁵ Zech. 8. 19.

⁵⁶ Schürer, *Geschichte*, I, p. 365, n. 6, and p. 415, n. 167; Kromayer, *l. c.*, p. 571.

the following text of Josephus on which it is based to a critical examination. He says: 'This time (when there was war between the Arabs and Herod) it was that the fight happened at Actium, between Octavius Caesar and Antony in the seventh year of the reign of Herod, and then it was also that there was an earthquake in Judea'.

Josephus cannot mean that the battle of Actium coincided with the earthquake in Judea, as the former event occurred in September,⁵⁷ while the latter occurred at the beginning of the Spring.⁵⁸ This passage would be entirely unintelligible if we did not fortunately have a parallel reference to these events in the *Bellum Iudaicum*, which clears up the true meaning of this text: 'In the seventh year of his reign (Herod's), when the war about Actium was at the height, at the beginning of the spring the earth was shaken'. *Κατ' ἔτος μὲν τῆς βασιλείας ἔβδομον, ἀκμά-ξοντος δὲ τοῦ Ἀκτίου πολέμου. ἀρχομένου γὰρ ἔαρος ἡ γῆ σεισθεῖσα* (*Bell. Iud.* I, 19. 3).

Here Josephus identifies with the time of the earthquake not the battle (*μάχη*) of Actium, but the war (*πόλεμος*) about Actium, which begun in the winter of 32–31 B.C.E., was at its height in the spring,⁵⁹ and culminated in Sept. 2, 31 B.C.E. As Josephus states here plainly, when the war about Actium was at its height, at the beginning of the spring, that the earthquake took place, and this was in the seventh year of Herod's reign. In such manner we must interpret the previous passage in *Antiq.* Consequently, the actual

⁵⁷ Zonar, X, 30 κατὰ τὴν δευτέραν τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου μηνός: also Dio, LI, 1 τοιαύτη τις ἡ ναυμαχία αὐτῶν τῇ δευτέρᾳ τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου ἐγένετο: see Fischer, *Römische Zeittafeln*, p. 368.

⁵⁸ 'Αρχομένου γὰρ ἔαρος ἡ γῆ σεισθεῖσα, *Bell. Iud.* I, 19, 3.

⁵⁹ Clinton, *Fasti Hellenici*, III; Dio, L, 11 τοῦ δὲ δὴ ἥρος δ μὲν Ἀντώνιος οὐδαμοῦ ἐκινήθη . . . καὶ δ Ἀγρίππας τὴν τε Μεθώνην ἐκ προσβολῆς λαβών.

battle of Actium fell in the eighth year of Herod, and the first year ends properly with the month of Nisan 37 B. C. E., as we have assumed.

The above explanation is based of course on the assumption that the beginning of spring preceded Nisan. This is contrary to Schürer's views that the Jews reckoned the spring season from the first of Nisan.⁶⁰ There can be no doubt, however, that Schürer was in error on this point. While the Jewish months are lunar, the seasons were fixed according to the position of the sun, and in an intercalated year, the beginning of the spring must precede the sixteenth of the month of Nisan.⁶¹ The year 31 B. C. E., being a pre-sabbatical year, was in fact intercalated in accordance with an ancient rule.⁶²

The entire discussion of the date of the capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sosius would not be complete without the consideration of the supplementary statement of Josephus: ὅσπερ ἐκ περιτροπῆς τῆς γενομένης ἐπὶ Πομπήιου τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις συμφορᾶς. καὶ γὰρ ὑπ' ἐκείνου τῇ αὐτῇ ἔλαωσαν ἡμέρᾳ μετὰ ἑτη εἰκοσιεπτά (Ant. XIV, 16. 4). On the face of it Josephus appears to mean that the capture of Jerusalem by Herod marked the anniversary of Pompey's conquest of the Holy City. Our date—the 10th of Tebet—can hardly be taken as the anniversary of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem, as this appears in all likelihood to have taken place in one of the summer months, or more accurately the month of Tammuz, in which a well-established

⁶⁰ Schürer, I, p. 365, n. 6.

⁶¹ מעברין השנה על אביב ועל החקופה ו, see Talmud Sanhedrin 11-12 and Tosefta, *ibid.*

⁶² אין מעברין לא בשבעית ולא במצואי שביעית אימתי רגילין, עבר בערבי שביעית, T. Jerushalmi Sanhedrin 18 d; Babli, *ibid.*

fast-day fell.⁶³ But this passage is, in any event, difficult to reconcile with the facts, according to any of the above-cited identifications of the date of Herod's capture of Jerusalem. For the conquest of Pompey to which Josephus refers took place according to his own testimony in the third month of the siege⁶⁴ on a fast-day in 179 Olymp. in the consulate of Caius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero, which corresponds to 63 B. C. E.

Now between 63 B. C. E. and 37 B. C. E. there intervenes only a period of twenty-six years and not twenty-seven.

This last consideration makes it impossible to interpret $\tau\hat{\eta}\alpha\hat{\nu}\tau\hat{\eta}\hat{\eta}\mu\epsilon\rho\eta$, 'the same day', as referring to the anniversary. It must be assumed that fast-days on which the respective events took place were not identical. Only thus it becomes possible to explain the interval of twenty-seven years, namely, that the event of Pompey fell in the month of Tammuz and that of Herod in the month of Tebet. Reckoning the fractional year from Tammuz to Tishri or Dius as one year, Josephus properly counted the intervening period as twenty-seven years. As to the literal meaning, 'the same day', this can only be taken to mean the same day of the week. Thus Tammuz 9, 63 B. C. E. fell on Tuesday or Wednesday, while Tebet 10, 37 B. C. E. fell on Wednesday or Thursday.⁶⁵ Assuming that the two dates respectively fell on Wednesday—and this can also be maintained on other grounds—we see that Josephus

⁶³ See Prideaux, *Histoire des Juifs et des peuples voisins*, V, p. 517, Paris, 1726. For a full discussion about the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey and the reckoning of the years of Hyrcanus, see below, Appendix.

⁶⁴ Comp. *Bell. Iud.* I, 7. 4.

⁶⁵ See also Unger, *l. c.*, p. 276, where he states that the 10th of Tishri 63 B. C. E. fell on Sunday or Monday, and the 10th of Tishri 37 B. C. E. fell on Wednesday or Thursday.

could well count, *καὶ γὰρ ὅπ' ἐκείνου τῇ αὐτῇ ἐάλωσαν ἡμέρᾳ μετὰ ἔτη εἰκοσιεπτά*. That both Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and Herod's fell on Wednesday is curiously corroborated by an obscure and corrupt passage in an old historical document which is otherwise unintelligible: *בשחררב הבית בראשונה אותו הים [חשעה באב היה ו] מוצאי שבת היה ומווצאי שביעית [היתה] ומשמרתו של יהוירוב . . . וכן שנייה . . . ובה ובה הלוים עומדים על דוכן ואומרים שירה וממה שירה אומרים וישב עליהם את אונם . . . בחריש הרביעי בחשעה לחדש הקבעה העיר בראשונה. בשנונה . . . Seder Olam, ch. XXX, ed. Neubauer.*⁶⁶ The day on which the Temple was destroyed the first time fell on the 9th of Ab, on the day following the sabbath, in a post-sabbatical year and in the watch of Jehojarib. Thus also the second destruction.... Both times the Levites stood at their posts and recited their psalm. What psalm did they recite?

'And he hath brought upon them their own iniquity,
And will cut them off in their own evil;

The Lord our God will cut them off.' (Ps. 94.)

In the fourth month, in the seventh day thereof a breach was made in the city during the first (Destruction) and on the seven(teen)th thereof during the second (Destruction).

That this passage is incoherent was already felt in the Talmud, without any satisfactory explanation being offered there.⁶⁷ Thus, it is well known both in the Talmud and in the works of Josephus that the sacrificial service was abolished on the seventeenth of Tammuz, during the siege of Titus,⁶⁸ while here the statement is

⁶⁶ In Talmud Taanit and Erakin, the above passage is found with other variants.

⁶⁷ See Arakin 11-12.

⁶⁸ Talmud Taanit 26: *בשבעה עשר בחמוץ בטל התמיד* ; comp. *Bell. Iud.* VI, 2, 1: 'On the seventeenth day of the month Ponemus the daily sacrifice (*ἱνδελεχισμός*) had failed'.

made that the sacrifices continued till the ninth of Ab. In addition, there is the glaring contradiction that the Temple is said to have fallen on Sunday, while the psalms which the Levites chanted in accompaniment to the alleged sacrificial service of that day, formed the recitation of Wednesday (cp. Mishnah Tamid).

It must be assumed that the text represents an incomplete and defective Baraita. The antecedents of בוה ובוח are not בראשונה ובשניה of the existing text, which refers to the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus respectively, but must allude to a missing sentence which described the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey and Herod also as בראשונה ובשניה. Thus interpreted, the allusion to the Levites at the sacrificial service reminds one strongly of Josephus's description of the siege and fall of Jerusalem under both these conquerors, where he emphasizes the fact that the daily sacrifices were kept up till the very fall of the city.⁶⁹ It only remains to be noted that the psalm which the Levites are said to have chanted on these two days respectively was the psalm which was recited every Wednesday.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ As regards the time when Jerusalem was captured by Pompey, we read the following: 'Many of the priests when they saw their enemies assailing them with swords in their hands, without any disturbance went on with their divine worship, and were slain while they were offering their drink-offerings and burning their incense', *Bell. Iud.* I, 7. 5. As regards the time of Herod we have the following: 'When the outer court of the Temple and the lower city were taken . . . but now fearing lest the Romans should hinder them from offering their daily sacrifices to God, they sent an embassage, and desired that they would only permit them to bring in beasts for sacrifices which Herod granted', *Ant.*, XVI, 16. 2. See J. Lehmann, 'Quelques dates importantes de la chronologie du second temple', *RÉJ.*, XXXVII (1898), pp. 1-44.

⁷⁰ Mishnah Tamid, ch. 7, Mishnah 4. Some again object to our theory as to the dates of these cycles of Shemittot on the ground that in accordance

We may now finally dispose of the last argument which was raised above, against the fixation of the order of the sabbatical cycles, namely, that while the year preceding the destruction of the Temple was a sabbatical year according to the testimony of the Talmud, as well as on the therewith 40-41 c.e. would necessarily be a sabbatic year, whereas Josephus, in treating of the Jews petitioning Petronius not to place a statue of the Emperor in the Sanctuary, reports the latter as saying to them, 'Go, till the soil'. Schürer aptly observes that this is not sufficient to prove the year non-sabbatical: 'dieses indirekte Argument . . . nicht stark genug ist, um die überlieferten positiven Daten in Betreff der Sabbatjahre umzustossen' (*Geschichte*, I, p. 35; see also pp. 495-507). Also Wieseler, *Stud. u. Krit.* (1879), p. 529 inclines very strongly to the idea that that conversation between the Jews and Petronius took place in 39-40 b.c.e. Graetz (*Geschichte*, III, 2, n. 8) considers also that 40-41 c.e. could not have been a sabbatic year by reason of what is stated in Mishnah *Sotah*, VII, 7: **מוֹצָא יְוָתָרָה שֶׁל חָג בְּשָׁמְנִי בְּמִצְאֵי שְׁבֻעִית—אֲנָרוֹפֵס הַמֶּלֶךְ** עמד וכבל וקרא עמוד ושבחוו הרים וכשנגי לא חובל تحت עליך איש נבריא זלנו עניינו דמעות אמרו לו אל תחירא אֲנָרוֹפֵס אֲחִינוּ אַתָּה On the feast of Tabernacles in the post-sabbatical year the king read the Pentateuch (before the multitude).

The Mishnah, after stating that the king stood while reading, continues: 'And when he read the passage, "Thou mayest not put over thee a foreign man", his eyes were suffused with tears (the Herodian family was of Idumean origin)—they said to him, "Be not afraid, Agrippa, thou art our brother: our brother art thou"'. The post-sabbatic year thus falls in 41-42 c.e., whereas, as Graetz thinks, Agrippa I did not come to Judea until 42 c.e. (*Monatssch.*, 1877, p. 433). But this objection will not affect matters, for admitting that Agrippa could not have been present at the service of Feast of Tabernacles in 41 b.c., it has never been proved that the passage refers to Agrippa I, and not to Agrippa II. Derenbourg, *Essai*, p. 217, thinks Agrippa II was meant, as does also Büchler, 'Die Priester und der Cultus im letzten Jahrzehnt des Jerusalemschen Tempels', *Bericht der Isr. Theol. Lehranstalt in Wien*, 1895, p. 12, and Hitzig, II, 571. See also Brann in *Monatssch.*, 1870, pp. 541-8. The word 'king' could have been applied to Agrippa II, for besides his being king in Galilee, he was, by appointment, given charge of the Temple. In the Talmud we find evidences of his being called king, as in the statement **שָׁאַל אֲנָרוֹפֵס הַמֶּלֶךְ** **אַת רַבִּי אַלְיעֹזֶר** (*Tanhuma Genesis*, ed. Frankfurt, p. 6 d, 1701); **שָׁאַל אֲפָטְרוֹפּוֹס שֶׁל אֲנָרוֹפֵס הַמֶּלֶךְ אַת רַבִּי אַלְיעֹזֶר** (*Sukkah* 27 b).

basis of our calculation, nevertheless Josephus refers to the growing fruit in the land of Edom which was invaded by Simon the Zealot that year (69 C. E.). This difficulty is easily solved by the simple and well-known fact that the laws of the sabbatical year affected only the lands of Palestine, and had no application in Edom or in any other country that was annexed to Palestine.⁷¹

⁷¹ See Mishnah, Shebiith, VI, 1. Many scholars think that 69-70 was sabbatic and that this is attested by the Baraita . . . , which according to them means the latter part of the sabbatic year, in which the month of Ab would be the eleventh. Such is Caspary's opinion (*Life of Christ*, pp. 23-6, 37), and Graetz's understanding of the expression במוֹצָא שְׁבִיעִית, *Geschichte*, III, 2, n. 8. In truth, however, the sabbatic year was 68-69, whereas the following year, 69-70, for which we have coined the expression, post-sabbatic. That מִזְמָא שְׁבִיעִית in the Talmud means the post-sabbatic year and not any part of the seventh year is evident from many passages, e. g. 'אֵין מִעֲבָרֵן הַשָּׁנָה לֹא בְשְׁבִיעִית וְלֹא בְמוֹצָא שְׁבִיעִית' [They do not intercalate, neither in the sabbatical year nor in the post-sabbatical]. This is also evident from Ab. zarah 9 b. : 'נִימְפִי חָד שָׁחָא' [If any man is uncertain as to the year of the Shemittah he is in, he should count the years, from the year in which the Sanctuary was destroyed and add one year, since that event took place in a year that followed a sabbatic year].

This error—that the destruction of the Temple was in a sabbatic year—we find not only among modern scholars, but among the rabbis of the Middle Ages. This is even the idea of Rashi, see his remarks, and Tosaphot on Ab. zarah 9 b. Not only were they misled into thinking that the year of destruction was sabbatic, but also as to the exact year. According to some, the destruction took place in the year 3828 A. M., i. e. 67-68 C. E., while others place it in the year 3829 A. M. (68-69 C. E.). See Rashi and Tosaphot, *ibid.*, and *Seder ha-Kabalah*, by Abraham ibn Daud (Rabad). Both dates are false. The destruction of the Temple, as is known, took place in the month of Ab, 3830 A. M. (69-70 C. E.). This error we can detect in a passage in the Talmud, Ab. zarah 9 b, which is from the latest Amoraim or is an addition of a later time, confusing the two statements: אמר ר' חנינא אחר ארבע מאות לחרבן הבית אם יאמר לך אדם קח שרה שוה אלף [This is superfluous and does not appear in the Spanish MS. in the Jewish Theological

The correct order of the sabbatical cycles was preserved centuries later in the Gaonic schools and in Palestine. According to their calculation, says Maimonides, 'this year 4936 A. M. and 1107 after the destruction of the Temple (1175-6) is a post-sabbatical year'.⁷²

ARBUT ALFIM OMATIM V'SHLASHIM V'ACHOT LBIRIAT ULM [Seminary of America.] AM YAMAR LK ADM KAH LK SHOH SHAH ALF DINARIY BRIDNER AHD AL TAKH. R. Hanina said: 'After 400 from the destruction of the Temple, if a man offers you a field worth 1,000 denarii for one denarius, buy not'. (The reason for this advice was that the Messiah would come.) In a Baraita it is stated: 'In 4231 A. M. if you are offered for one denarius a field worth 1,000 denarii, take not'. The Talmud asks what is the difference between the two, and gives the answer: *AIKA BINIYHO CHALTA SHANIN RMTNHTA TPFIA* *CHALTA SHANI*. The difference between R. Hanina's statement and that in the Baraita is three years. The author of this passage thought that the destruction took place 3828 A. M., and R. Hanina's statement would apply to after 4228 A. M., while according to the Baraita it is 4231 A. M.,—which exceeds by three years. But the two statements are in agreement. The destruction took place 3830 A. M., and R. Hanina's statement would mean 'after 4230 A. M. buy nothing', while the Baraita specifies 4231 as the beginning of the period.

This statement about the cycles of Shemittot is corroborated by a well-known Haggadah in the Talmud Sanhedrin 91a in connexion with Alexander. In telling of this dispute before him of representative Jews and Ishmaelites, the Haggadah ends with *VA'ORAH SHANA SHBIYAH YOTHA* 'that year was sabbatic'. Alexander was in Palestine 332 B. C. E. Counting back from 164-163 twenty-four cycles, we get 332-331 as sabbatic.

וְשָׁנַת הַשְׁמִיטָה יָדוּעָה הִיא וּמִפּוּרְסָמָת אֶצְלַ הַגּוֹנִים וְאֶנְשֵׁי אָרֶץ—⁷² יִשְׂרָאֵל . . . וְלֹפִי חַשְׁבּוֹן זֶה תַּהֲיֵי שָׁנָה זוּ שֶׁהִיא שָׁנַת שְׁבֻעָה וּמְאָה וְאֶלָּף לְחֹרְבָן. Maimonides, *Yad ha-Hazakah, Shemittah*, X, 6. The year 4936 A. M. (i. e. 1175-6 C. E.) being, as Maimonides says in the name of the Geonim, post-sabbatical, confirms our view on sabbatical cycles that 3830 A. M. (69-70 C. E., year of destruction of the Temple) was post-sabbatical, thus making 158 cycles; but, according to Maimonides, 4936 A. M. is the year 1107 of the destruction of the Temple. Herein he erred, taking as year of the destruction 3829 A. M. (68-69 C. E.), which error we already detected in a passage in Talmud (see note 71).

As to how this error arose among the Geonim, and with regard to the *מִנְן שְׁטוֹרוֹת*, i. e. Era of Contracts, see below.

(*To be continued.*)